

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

SANDFLY

761 Wen a pusson dies some one have fix im sho. Bout a yeah
754 ago an ole woman went fuh a walk right down this road yuh.
She went up on a hill cross frum yuh weah she live an the
nex mawnin she wuz foun dead theah. Mos folks said she
wuz cunjuh'd that night, though theah wuz some wut did
say she have haht trouble. Jis a week aw so ago the brothuh
of a neighbuh die right sudden an folks said he wuz cun-
juh'd too." * 15

764 In regard to death we found a rigid observance of customs
that were prevalent also in the other communities. For ex-
ample, one Negro's body had been shipped back from New
York City in order that it might be buried in Sandfly. Oth-
erwise, we were told, the spirit of the deceased would have
764 found no rest, but instead would have roamed the country-
775 side.¹ Here, too, was observed the practice of placing
broken bits of pottery and possessions last used by the dead
person on the grave for the purpose of supplying the needs
of the spirit.⁴⁷

832 In Sandfly there is a ready market for love powders and
789 charms.** This field has been highly commercialized and
• 7443 representatives of different corporations frequently visit
Sandfly selling such articles as *Adam and Eve Root*, *Lucky
Mojo Love Drops*, *Black Cat Ashes*, and *Courting Powder*.⁶
Apparently the women resort to the use of the love charms
more frequently than the men, and their reason for doing so
was described by one woman as being "so dat dey kin rule
duh men." †

754 Old and young entertain a firm belief in the existence of
witches and spirits. The witches may come in a variety of
shapes, appearing as a person either male or female, an
animal, or sometimes as an insect.⁶⁸ When questioned re-
garding the apparitions, one person said, "A witch ride muh
sistuh mos every night."⁶⁹ He come singin a lill song. I

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

** *Ibid.*

† *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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533 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

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244 In the intervening years, this evolution toward more modern forms has continued. Moving Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people will take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

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494 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern institution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club, a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island. It contained a large grocery store and the only gym on the island and served as a center for adult education and voter registration.
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Mrs. Alice Wine

WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

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 Old times we never buy food. Man, you never used to buy nothing that time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

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 Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

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 Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

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 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice. And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time. Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

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to start with, you're going to have to become a registered citizen if you join. And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what? Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to Negroes would need their vote.

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One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask, "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."

So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better, make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

Mrs. Alice Wine

HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

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We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

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There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-

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hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a wonderful conqueror, I tell you that.

And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President. So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

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I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Christian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out. We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

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The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting something back.

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— And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and work-shops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up. When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I guess he was surprised to see it go up.

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One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place. The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

Mr. Esau Jenkins

OUT OF EGYPT I AM GOING TO CALL MY SONS

159 Now if anybody is happy, it ought to be Esau Jenkins, the person who
185 is talking here to you. Why? Twelve years and some months ago in this
443 community, I organized a club—what we call the Progressive Club.
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You folks have helped me start as a man and form a group. You are selling groceries, you are selling gasoline. Besides that, some time the early part of this month you have paid out all your debt and yet left \$175 to add to your store.

159 When I organized this Progressive Club, I could count the number of
185 voters on my one hand, and I don't have but five fingers.
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In twelve years you have caused this whole island to change. Today you got school buses running by your door and picking up your children, carrying them to a high school on Johns Island. Today you can say that my children will be educated—at least get a high school education on Johns Island.

(666) Today you could say in the last election we built up our voting strength so high until the white men in Charleston have to ask us to be in the polls on Johns Island and Edisto and Wadmalaw. Negroes have helped work for the Democratic party.

Now you could not have said that twelve years ago because you didn't vote. You didn't have a school. But today you have children getting ready to compete with anybody's children, because of your cooperation.

My friends, I want you to help me that I may go on, come what may. There are any number of times that I have walked alone. There are a lot of people who are afraid, because if they be seen walking along with me, the white folks might say, "Well, he is one of these persons who are fighting me."

But share it with Esau Jenkins, and thank God that God has helped us. We made an achievement that we are not ashamed of. You don't know how much you have done, friends—how many people are talking about what you have done; how many people are reading about what you have done.

Together let us go—sisters, brothers, blacks, whites, yellows, whatnot. We are all God's people, so we got to go together. And friends, I think all over the world today, people who love freedom are saying this morning, "Out of Egypt I'm going to call my sons."